



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Wildfire Smoke Can Exacerbate Health Problems**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is urging residents of Bismarck to use caution and avoid the wildfires and the resulting smoke from the fires that are burning around Bismarck. One wildfire, which started yesterday, has reignited and caused the evacuation of several areas south of Bismarck. Another fire is burning in east Bismarck. Winds are carrying smoke across the city.

Wildfires present health concerns for a number of reasons. Because North Dakota's wildfires are wind-driven, they can change direction rapidly and can move extremely fast. Anyone caught by flames can suffer serious burns or damage to airways from the superheated air. Anyone not involved in fire suppression or emergency management activities is urged to comply with evacuation orders and to stay out of the area so suppression crews can do their work.

Wildfire smoke can cause health problems as well. The smoke contains particulates that can be irritating to the respiratory system. Those who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or conditions such as asthma and allergies, can have strong adverse reactions to wildfire smoke. Staying indoors and away from the smoke plume is advisable for those who suffer from respiratory problems. If a person finds themselves reacting to wildfire smoke to the extent that it is affecting their breathing, they should seek immediate help from a medical provider.

For more information, contact Colleen Reinke, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.1318 or 4619.

– 30 –

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